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~~TOP SECRET SENSITIVE EYES ONLY~~

April 24, 1972

TO: General Haig

FROM: Henry A. Kissinger

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By SRG NARA, Date 8/3/94

1. Had four, hour-plus, rather stormy sessions with Brezhnev, Gromyko and Dobrynin, three of them attended by Brezhnev.

2. Brezhnev began with a long emotional statement about Vietnam stressing again that Moscow was not behind the offensive, that Hanoi had been hoarding Soviet weapons for two years. He said that it was the enemies of the summit, especially the Chinese, but also Hanoi, who were challenging America, that he was proceeding with the summit despite a formal request by Hanoi to cancel it. He had not yet had a reply from Hanoi regarding the private session which Moscow had urged. If I agreed he would transmit our concrete proposal to Hanoi. I asked him to do so.

After Brezhnev left, Gromyko said that he had been authorized to tell me: First, that Moscow had not realized until ten days ago how very serious we were about ending Vietnam. We therefore had to give them some time to use their influence. Second, they were transmitting our substantive proposal to Hanoi with the attitude of bringing about a rapid solution of the war or at least a significant improvement in the situation.

Comment: It was significant that there was no reference to the end of bombing. Under present circumstances, transmitting our proposals even if they do not endorse them must be considered by Hanoi as an unfriendly act. After all we are asking for the withdrawal of all units introduced into SVN since March 29 or six divisions, respect of the DMZ, an end to rocket attack on cities, release of all U.S. prisoners held for four years or more just to end the bombing.

Whatever the outcome of their demarche to Hanoi, my visit left no doubt about our determination. I told them that May 2 was the last possible date for a private meeting; that the private meeting had to bring rapid and concrete results; that if it failed the President would escalate and turn right at whatever risk; that this would make it

impossible even for his opponents to pursue a major detente policy. If I have erred it is on the side of excessive toughness.

3. The announcement of my visit produced a real fracas. First Brezhnev withdrew his agreement to an announcement. When I put my foot down they engaged in the ploy of producing their version only after Brezhnev had left and then Gromyko claimed he had no flexibility. Their version left open the implication that I had sought the meeting and put it all in the context of the summit. I blew my top. Gromyko called Brezhnev and we finally agreed on following language:

Between April 20 and 24, Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, was in Moscow to confer with the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU Brezhnev and Foreign Minister Gromyko. The discussions dealt with important international problems as well as with bilateral matters preparatory to the talks between President Nixon and Soviet leaders in May.

The implications are all there and it was, in any event, the best obtainable.

4. With respect to SALT, Gromyko confirmed that Smith could not have been given the SLBM proposal because Seymonov did not yet have it. I think Seymonov pulled the same stunt as before May 20 of claiming more than he knew. In any event, it was agreed that the President can say next week that he had been in touch with Brezhnev regarding SALT, that based on his approach the Soviet leaders gave me a counterproposal while I was in Moscow substantially accepting our offer; that this broke the deadlock and that the President was instructing Smith to work out the details before the summit.

5. Other matters covered today were the Middle East with respect to which Brezhnev was very tough. I shall reserve this for my return.

6. To sum up these seem to me the pluses of the trip:

(A) Moscow's readiness to receive me three days after we bombed Hanoi and Haiphong and while we were bombing and shelling NVN.

(B) An announcement that when properly briefed makes plain Vietnam was discussed. The distinction between important international problems and bilateral matters related to the summit is a euphemism for Vietnam.

(C) Soviet willingness to transmit our procedural proposals to Hanoi and to urge private talks even while we continue bombing.

(D) Soviet willingness to transmit a very tough substantive proposal to Hanoi.

(E) Soviet recognition that we are deadly serious about Vietnam and that everything else is dependent on it.

(F) A SALT offer which culminates the private channel and accepts most of our proposals.

(G) Agreement on a declaration of principles to be published at the summit which includes most of our proposals and indeed involves a specific renunciation of the Brezhnev doctrine.

(H) Agreement to begin exploring MBFR.

(I) Agreement not to go beyond the FRG in pushing GDR Admission to UN.

(J) Enough holding actions on bilateral matters to give us a control over the implementation of the above.

For all this we give up the bombing of Haiphong for one week.